United Nations E/2018/52

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
20 March 2018

Original: English

2018 session
27 July 2017–26 July 2018
Agenda item 2
Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Application of an intergovernmental organization for observer status with the Economic and Social Council

Letter dated 11 July 2017 from the Executive Director of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research is an intergovernmental organization, and its establishment dates back to the White House Conference on Science and Economics Research Related to Global Change, which was held in 1990. Hosted by the Government of Uruguay, the Institute has 19 member countries in the Americas and was established as a regional network of cooperating research entities. The General Secretariat of the Organization of American States is the depository of the Agreement Establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research.

The Institute pursues the principles of scientific excellence, international cooperation and the full and open exchange of scientific information relevant to global change. In order to do so, its objectives are:

(a) To promote regional cooperation for interdisciplinary research on aspects of global change related to earth, ocean, atmospheric and environmental sciences and to social sciences, with particular attention paid to impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity, socioeconomic impacts, and technologies and economic aspects associated with the mitigation of and adaptation to global change;

(b) To conduct or select for sponsorship scientific programmes and projects on the basis of their regional relevance and scientific merit, as determined by scientific review;

(c) To pursue, on a regional scale, such research that cannot be pursued by any individual State or institution and dedicate itself to scientific issues of regional importance;

(d) To improve the scientific and technical capabilities and research infrastructure of the States of the region by identifying and promoting the

18-04287 (E) 040418

Please recycle

development of facilities for the implementation of data management and through the scientific and technical training of professionals;

(e) To foster the standardization, collection, analysis and exchange of scientific data relevant to global change;

(f) To improve public awareness and provide scientific information to Governments for the development of public policy relevant to global change;

(g) To promote cooperation among the different research institutions of the region;

(h) To promote cooperation with research institutions in other regions.

The Conference of the Parties of the Institute comprises the 19 member countries that have ratified the Agreement. As the principal policymaking organ of the Institute, it establishes, reviews and updates the Institute's policies and procedures and evaluates its work and accomplishments. It also reviews and approves the Institute's scientific agenda, annual and long-range plans and financial budgets.

The Agreement establishing the Institute, the standing rules of the Conference of the Parties and the agreement between the Government of Uruguay and the Institute concerning the headquarters of its Integrated Operations and Finance Directorate are annexed to the present letter.* Other information and documentation can be found at www.iai.int.

The Institute funds collaborative, multidisciplinary science essential to understanding global changes and providing timely input for coordinated action in its member countries. Many of the environmental issues investigated by Institute programmes are at the core of regional challenges with regard to sustainably managing natural resources and maintaining or improving environmental quality.

The Institute's Scientific Advisory Committee and Science-Policy Advisory Committee recognize that the Sustainable Development Goals may guide future research by the Institute and recommend establishing greater linkages with policymaking. As the Scientific Advisory Committee pointed out in its report to the Conference of the Parties, that it was critical, at the present time, for the Conference to develop priority research themes that quickly responded to regional needs and for it to support the Institute in developing strategies for increased capacity-building, building resiliency in large and small communities and developing solutions that would help the region to generate more jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of people.

The scientific community is called upon to acknowledge the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. The regular and voluntary country-led reviews of progress at the national level will feed into reviews at the regional and global levels, as well as into thematic reviews. Contributions from science under the new Sustainable Development Goal framework will be crucial to their implementation.

Sustainable development begins with science, and the science of global change is critical. Several Institute investigators have taped video messages to raise awareness of important issues under several Sustainable Development Goals, as part of the global campaign, Project Everyone, supported by the United Nations. Their messages, available on the Institute's website, express important concerns: sustainable communities and health; frontiers of development and health; social adaptation and knowledge for rural resilience under market and climate shocks; how

* The attachments and additional documentation are on file with the Secretariat and are available for consultation.

to communicate about science; water as a cause for national and international cooperation; how societies should value ecosystems; and climate change and biodiversity.

The wealth of the Institute's contribution lies not only in the funds that sustain its scientific networks, but in the linkages it is able to create between science and policy. In accordance with rule 79 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, I have the honour to request the participation of the Institute as an observer in all deliberations of the Council on questions that fall within the scope of Institute activities, including questions related to global change research and the ensuing guidance provided by the Institute to its member countries in the Americas.

(*Signed*) Marcos **Regis da Silva**
Executive Director